1: Hanks E-5 (1953-1954) 1964 AO7 Central Thai AO7

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3:Hauck et al. D-5 (1952-1954) 1959 AO7 Central Thai AO7
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114 In connection with their graduate study at Cornell, Sylvia de la Paz summarized the observations on feeding practices of children from birth to two years, and Barbara J. Smith summarized data obtained on growth in height and weight of infants and small children in Bang Chan.

123 The author is particularly grateful for the interest and friendliness of the parents, especially the mothers of Bang Chan. They patiently answered our questions at each visit and reassured the small children who seldom saw strangers and who were unused to being weighed and measured. Without their generous cooperation this study would not have been possible.

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4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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harvest time, serve to create a rite of intensification as family members decide together what work will be done by whom, arise early in the morning to work together happily in the fields—sometimes for as long as fourteen hours at a stretch—and actually see the fruits of their coöperative labor mount up on the threshing floors. The sense of familial solidarity and intradependence, and its associated feelings of love, is experienced by all.[18] Also, since harvesting more often than not involves working reciprocally with other families, the host of a reciprocal labor group giving a feast whenever possible at the end of the day, it serves, although to a lesser extent, to intensify feelings of membership in the larger community.

## *Summary*

In my discussion of the "cultural background," I have dwelt primarily on kinship because the family is functionally the most significant social unit in the village and because it is within the context of kinship that personality is developed and, in Bang Chan, most frequently expressed. None of this is meant to imply a lack of importance for other social units—the monastery, the school, the state—or for the non-institutionalized relationships—friends, drinking partners, and business contacts. However, kinship does provide the basic psychological model for all human relationships in Bang Chan,

[18] Although the annual cycle of Thai peasants is described in detail in the available ethnographies on Thai rural life (deYoung 1955, Fraser 1960, Kaufman 1960, Kingshill 1960, Sharp *et al.* 1953) a few words should be added about the psychological dimensions of this cycle. Thus familial solidarity, intradependence, and love are not the only sentiments that are heightened during the harvest period. Perhaps the most striking quality of this season (December to January) is the increase in the optimism, joy, and general psychic well-being of the villagers: people laugh more loudly than usual; they relish telling about the things they are going to buy; parents take more kindly to the gallivanting of the children. These months contrast with transplanting time (late July to early August) and the period prior to harvest (October to November), when an overabundance of rain can destroy the villagers' rice seedlings or their entire crop. These latter periods are marked not so much by anxiety as by a sense of watchful waiting. All these contrast with the Dry season when things are especially quiet in Bang Chan and when villagers spend their time repairing farming equipment and houses, gossiping, or are working on jobs outside the community. Villagers say that of the three major seasons of the year (Dry, February to June; Rainy, June to January; Cold, January to February) they like the Rainy season best. The season coincides with the rice-growing cycle, is marked by Buddhist Lent and, excepting a final week of Monsoon downpour, is in fact the most comfortable period of the year.

These seasonal activities and attitudes also have direct implications for field work. Thus, while villagers gave freely of their time during the dry season and after the harvest, and during the latter were especially outgoing and benign, many simply would not see me during the weeks of planting and harvesting. The benign attitudes of villagers interviewed after the harvest were reflected directly in the data, as were the noncommittal responses of some villagers who were interviewed during transplanting time.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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non-histrionic agitation) * with which they reported some of their experiences suggested that this was indeed the case. I mention these considerations because the kind of material to come out of the interviews was perhaps not what one would expect from typically affable, easygoing Thai peasants. However, it must be recognized that the material focused only on the private sector of their lives, and indeed a very narrow area of this sector. Thus, although the articles may have been more analytic than previous efforts, they were also considerably more limited in scope.

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I have attempted above to describe and evaluate almost all the available literature on Thai personality. There are a few additional sources which might be cited (Ratanakorn 1955, Boesch 1956, Mosel 1957), but their major concerns seem so tangential to our present purposes that it would add little to discuss them. By way of summary, the following points should be noted. The Thai language psychological literature is for the most part an unself-conscious, non-analytic folk literature, and as such is a rich source of data rather than a source of ideas on Thai personality. Illustrations of the value of the literature as data were provided in the text. However, since these data are primarily the product of an urban literati it is difficult to determine precisely to what extent they are also descriptive of peasants, although many of the traits reported seem apposite. There are no psychologically oriented Thai language essays dealing exclusively with villagers. The English language literature tends to be more analytic and broad-ranging in its concerns. Excluding Tirabutana's autobiography, these efforts seem to fall into one of three categories: (1) itemizations of manifest traits with little attention given to the psychodynamics involved (Thai psychologist, Phillips in Cornell Thailand Handbook, Textor); (2) sensitive psychological reflections on incomplete or specialized ethnographic data (R. F. Benedict, leMay); and (3) analyses of a limited set of private psychological issues from a few informants. (Hanks and Phillips, Phillips).

### *Psychological Dimensions of Village Interaction*

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Most personality portrayals proceed either by discussing how people behave in terms of a specific set of analytic issues, such as aggression,

* This is important simply because when opportunity permits—and the life-history situation is clearly such an opportunity—villagers love to tell a good story: full of histrionics, feigned exaggerations, and emotional flourishes. However, our informants were not given to theatrics during the interviews; on the contrary, they tended to tell their stories with an almost poignant seriousness. The fact that we were the first people ever to take such a direct, personal interest in them as individuals played a crucial role here. Being asked to reveal for the first time how they felt about their early lives, their families, and themselves was cause not only for pride but trust, and they often used the interviews as a way of unburdening themselves.

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4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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need. The problem is that we really do not know, although comparative data from primatology (Yerkes 1943, Kroeber 1948: 27–29 and 60–61) clearly suggest that play belongs to the former category. If this is indeed the case it would imply that play is subject to the same degree of cultural influence, channeling, and socialization as are hunger, sex, and aggression, but can no more be fully obliterated than can these needs. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that this reasoning is correct, then the compensatory "escape" and "regressive" functions attributed to play by the authors noted above would not be at all unreasonable: play might well come to serve as an escape from adult reality in the same way that food sometimes serves as an escape from sexual anxiety or sex from food anxiety (Holmberg 1950). However, the point is that these are not the primary or typical functions of these needs, but secondary and defensive ones; although significant, they hardly comprise the necessary conditions for their being. If this approach is valid, we would be considerably wiser in our present state of knowledge (the Protestant Ethic and its intellectual extensions notwithstanding) to direct our attention to identifying the varying forms of play from culture to culture rather than to dwell on its secondary, compensatory functions.

Whatever its ultimate motivational basis, there is no doubting either the spontaneity or ingenuousness with which Bang Chaners turn social situations into occasions for play. For the most part they seem prompted in these situations by the simple desire to have a good time rather than to affect others in a socially pointed way, that is, their humor is not typically aimed at being sarcastic, didactic, or even exhibitionistic, although the person who excels at being funny is quickly recognized as such and is to an extent admired.[7] There is, in the negative sense noted earlier, an element of interpersonal effect operating here: comedy is a technique which almost by definition reduces the potentiality for face-to-face conflict. However, the villagers' play seems aimed primarily at satisfying personalistic function: their *individual* needs for pleasure and amusement.

The forms that these play activities take are numerous.[8] Perhaps their

[7] In the more explicitly institutionalized forms of comedy—*likay* (folk dramatic shows) or newspaper and magazine cartoons—these aims do come into play and often assume extreme, sometimes even biting, proportions. However, this is the comparatively safe world of theatre and "literature." Among themselves, in the world of face-to-face contact, villagers are considerably more gentle (or less sophisticated) and do not focus explicitly on such purposes.

[8] We will be concerned primarily with the forms of play, not its content. For whatever reason, humor and comedy seem to be the last refuge of what is genuinely private in a culture. Intercultural translations may succeed in communicating the manifest content of another people's humor, but they so frequently miss its intent that the result is either perplexity or disappointment ("Yes, and what happens then?").

The dangers of trying to share humor interculturally were perhaps never brought home better than when I tried to get the villagers' reaction to a story that received

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most subtle expression is in the marvelous word games that the villagers play. What is striking about these games from an analytic viewpoint is not so much that they are funny, but that villagers are continually attentive to opportunities for playing them, and actively try to structure situations along such lines. In a sense, they are not "games" at all but verbal asides that emerge spontaneously from the discourse of everyday contact, and which serve to make such contacts enjoyable. One form of word play is particularly popular. For the lack of a better term, it could be called "silent stinky pinky."[9] Here two persons are chatting, and person A works into the conversation a statement that sounds completely innocuous. (A man, for example, says to a woman, *hen mii*, meaning "see the bear.") Person B, forever attentive, knows that words are deceptive: although A *said* one thing, he was really *thinking of*, and expects B to be *thinking of*, its rhymed phonemic inversion, which is vulgar or insulting. (Although the man said to her, *hen mii*, he was really thinking of *men kii*, meaning "your vulva smells.") Person B picks up the cue and responds with a statement that sounds equally innocuous but which when mentally inverted is just as scatological. The game continues until one of the parties gives up, whereupon the conversation returns with laughter to its original concerns. It must be emphasized that although this game is phrased in terms of a verbal contest, its purpose is not to best the other person but to work out with him or her a dialogue entertaining to both.

Sometimes these games arise and die out so quickly that it is difficult even for other, nonparticipating Siamese to spot them. The particular example cited here is one that has become almost part of the folklore of conversational gambits. However, what delights many of the villagers is the unpredictability of these patterns. On one occasion, I unwittingly juxtaposed a few English phonemes that had two informants and my assistant literally rolling on the floor with laughter. We were talking about the

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wide currency in Bangkok newspapers during 1956. It seemed that a husband was waiting outside a brothel to escort his wife, one of the prostitutes, home. She was busy with a customer. The husband called to her, telling her to hurry. She called back, saying that she would be through shortly. A few minutes later, he called again, and once more she said that she would be coming along. Finally, the husband went in and shot both his wife and her customer "because I lost my patience." When I told this story to several villagers, I was the only one who chortled. Most of them either commented on the sadness of the story or said the husband was stupid for killing the family breadwinner.

[9] In American stinky-pinky, people try to guess the rhymed equivalents of abstract definitions. Thus, if person A says, "I am thinking of a 'cadaverous Marxist,'" person B might say, "a dead red." The Thai version differs from its American cousin in that it is not only unspoken but is not really a parlor game. The tonal, monosyllabic nature of the Thai language probably is an important preconditioning factor here. (See also Haas 1951 and 1957 for illustrations of other kinds of verbal play.)

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various kinds of ants living in Thailand and the United States. (Such are the topics that interest villagers.) The villagers wanted to know the English names for small red ants, normal black ones, and the large, rusty colored variety that are indigenous to the tropics. I named the first two with no difficulty. For the third, I said simply, "a giant ant." The assistant, turning to one of the informants, first gave the literal Thai equivalent of "giant," and then, as if this were the funniest thing he had heard that week, began to repeat, "giant, gi-ant, gi-ant." In a few seconds, they were all bursting with laughter.

Different, yet part of the same psychological constellation, is the whole complex of behaviors associated with the term, *sanuk*. *Sanuk* is usually translated into English simply as "fun." However, this translation conveys little of the motivational significance of the term. Essentially, *sanuk* is a quality inherent in all situations which are not only fun but also emotionally worthwhile. In fact, these two states are often thought of as reciprocals of one another. An activity that is novel, diverting, or that can be done comfortably, is *sanuk dii* (good fun); one that is tedious, overdemanding, that lacks the opportunity for frivolity, is not *sanuk* and should be avoided. Harvesting rice in coöperative work groups, attending a ceremonial, participating in an election (see Phillips 1958: 45–46), or even taking something as outlandish as a Sentence Completion Test are all *sanuk*. (The unifying elements of these diverse activities are either their novelty or the fact that they involve the presence of relatively large numbers of people but require no genuine interchange with them.) On the other hand, going into the army or working for a demanding superior are not *sanuk*.

The importance of *sanuk* is that it provides the villagers with a standard of value, a measure of how much they wish to commit themselves to a particular activity. The role of this standard should not be underestimated. Villagers who have taken a job in the city, often involving a time-bound daily routine or continuous, sustained attention to a task (work in a small factory, for example) frequently return to the village explaining that they quit "because it wasn't *sanuk*. How can you work on a job if there is never any time for fun?" Foreign employers, with their greater concern for the job than with the person who does it and with their annoying tendency to be *cuu cii* (compulsive, fussy, exacting) are a particular target for this indictment, although this is usually based on hearsay rather than personal experience. On the other hand, villagers will often take on free of charge a major job (for example, helping a neighbor build a house) precisely because it is *sanuk*. Although there are other considerations operating here—creating or repaying a personal obligation, doing a *bunkhun* ("a goodness") for a neighbor—the "sanug-ful" aspects of the task are always

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521 The sociological context of a story-telling is probably what is most
522 important here. Bang Chan is a community where other than cultivating
538 the single rice crop and attending to daily household chores and religious activities, the villagers realistically have little else to do but talk to each other. This is clearly not an inevitable attribute of the peasant condition, but it is true of Bang Chan where little attention is given to such creative leisure activities as craftsmanship, music, and art, and where there is little occupational specialization. In fact, probably more time is given to gossiping than to any other single waking activity except daydreaming. Bang Chaners talk of many things, serious as well as lighthearted: the price of rice, religion, gambling, the doings of "big people," family disputes, and the like. However, by far one of the largest segments of their total conversational repertoire is given over to "funny" stories. Of course, no story is ever exclusively humorous in nature; all communication is inherently multidimensional, and even the funniest story has a substantive, non-humorous message. However, if stories may be judged by their behavioral effects (laughter) irrespective of their intellectual content, then the function of a major part of Bang Chan gossip is amusement.[10]

538 The motivations for the selection of banana peel type stories are more
154 complex. In part, the choice seems prompted by a "there but for the grace of God go I . . . " mentality. As suggested earlier, Bang Chaners have a keenly developed sense of the possible: to them, this is a world where anything, not only the probable or the predictable, can happen. The banana peel story, with its emphasis on the painfully ludicrous and extreme, is a perfect representation of such an uncertain world. Its beauty is

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[123] [10] During the early stage of field work, I attempted to do systematic naturalistic
[114] observations of these gossip groups. The purpose was simply to identify the kinds of
[126] topics uppermost in the villagers' minds and the modes of interaction that most frequently developed during the sessions; it was hoped that the latter information might be related to the psychological test materials of the discussants. As a precisely designed and executed project, the effort, however, was dropped after a short time. For one thing, it was too difficult for two observers to record the *simultaneous* verbal and kinesthetic interaction of *several* people without the aid of a self-powered tape recorder and with the added burden of having to strain the material through the translation process. The task was further complicated by the fact that the membership of these groups continually changed as people would leave and enter the conversations. Also the groups would often break down into smaller sub-groups. Most important was the sheer multidimensionality of the conversation: any one utterance could simultaneously be funny, aggressive, boastful, carry practical information, etc. However, enough information was culled from these early attempts and later less ambitious ones to prompt the statements presented here. It is this writer's observation that one of the reasons behind the success of so much of the "small group" research conducted in the United States is that the groups studied have been *problem solving* or *task-oriented*, rather than simple gossip groups. The highly functional nature of the former has provided built-in constraints on the freedom of action permitted the discussants, and has made observational problems comparatively easier to deal with.

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tries to identify the bases of their contact. Having once identified these, he then tends to assume that not only the bases but the relationships themselves are relatively constant and reliable.[18] The relationship between Bang Chan employer and employee is an excellent example of the problem. An investigator concerned with specifying the bases of their relationship could readily point to two factors; contractual (in the strict meaning of the term) and sentimental. The former involves the exchange of a sum of money for labor fulfilled. The latter involves an array of behaviors expressive of the employer's concern for his retainer: feeding him well, not making him work too hard, treating him like a younger sibling or "adopted" child, recognizing his birthday, or buying him small gifts if possible. Interestingly, the subordinate's obligations to his superior are considerably less explicit and social psychologically less demanding: he must simply respect and obey him. However, as accurate as these specifications are, they say nothing about the reliability of the relationship. It may be broken off over matters that have nothing to do with how well each is fulfilling his interactive responsibilities. The employee may become bored; he may have a sudden desire to take a trip or go to Bangkok; if he is from a distant village, he may suddenly become homesick and just as suddenly leave. As indicated earlier, he will frequently do this without saying a word to the employer; his absence is sufficient to indicate the termination of the relationship.

Very often the breakdown of the relationship is short-lived. I recall my exasperation during the early stages of field work when right in the middle of an important interview, my field assistant would tell me—with absolutely no forewarning—that he had to be in Bangkok in an hour and a half, and would have to leave now. When I suggested that the interview first be completed, the reply, the first time this happened, was "No, I promised a friend I would meet him at the movies, and I have to go now." When asked why he made a movie date during working hours, he answered: "Well, this was the only time my friend could go." The straightforwardness of his response indicated that it was both futile and dangerous (he might never return from the movies) to ask why the friend could not go alone, what the real reason was for his sudden departure, or why he did not tell me beforehand so I could have made different plans. Pursuing such queries would have served only to annoy my assistant, rather than hold him; and from his own point of view, they were really not my business. This kind of behavior was neither idiosyncratic to this individual nor limited to movies. Later on, when other assistants asked for intermissions, the explanations

[18] Certain relationships are of course explicitly recognized as inconstant and unreliable. The relationship between appliance owner and repairman in our society, for example, has come to have these special attributes—not without strain and exasperation, but as part of the reality of the relationship.

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571 given were equally oblique. Although I never really overcame my feeling
• 123 of helplessness in dealing with such situations, I did manage over a period
466 of time to communicate to those in my employ the appropriateness (at least regarding our own particular relationship) of giving me fair warning, *e.g.*, "Europeans are different in this way."

571 Again, there is nothing extraordinary or unique about personal desires and inclinations intruding on the stability of an interpersonal relationship. However, what is unique to Bang Chan and Thai culture in general is the frequency of such intrusions, the extent to which they take precedence over the responsibilities of the established relationship, and perhaps most im-
*[156] portant, their general expectability. No Bang Chaner is ever taken aback when another does not fulfill his assumptions about how that other will behave. Note that these intrusions may have little effect on the face-to-face contacts existing between people. My assistant's declaration that he was going to the movies was presented in a most affable way and in the other examples cited, where people were left in the lurch, there need not have been any contact whatsoever between the parties involved.

114 Reference was made to these modes of relationship in the section on
*156 Bang Chan social organization and kinship. However, they received their
171 first formal, and perhaps most elegant, formulation in a now famous article entitled "Thailand—A Loosely Structured Social System," by the late John F. Embree (1950). Embree's application of the notion of "loose structure" was mainly descriptive rather than analytic; it was used to summarize a wide variety of empirical materials. Thus (182): "The first characteristic of Thai culture to strike an observer from the West, or from Japan or Vietnam is the individualistic behavior of the people. The longer one resides in Thailand the more one is struck by the almost determined lack of regularity, discipline, and regimentation in Thai life. In contrast to Japan, Thailand lacks neatness and discipline; in contrast to Americans, the Thai lack respect for administrative regularity and have no industrial time sense." After providing an extensive series of examples—on the lack of binding filial piety, on the tendency to permit a thief to steal from a neighbor's house without raising an alarm or attempting to stop him, on the capacity to delay and double-talk those with whom one has business dealings, Embree concludes (184): "The point here once more is that . . . while obligations are recognized, they are not allowed to burden one unduly. Such as are sanctioned are observed freely by the individual—he acts of his own will, not as a result of social pressure."

114 While Embree's formulation is by definition phrased in social structural
*156 terms, it inevitably directs our attention to an underlying motivational issue: the nature of the villagers' dispositions to conformity. Conformity to the expectations of others—whether such expectations are shared, comple-

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These assumptions about the indeterminate nature of the universe and human actions are so integral to the villagers' cognitive orientations that Bang Chaners often hesitate to make even the most elementary kinds of prediction. Thus, in asking a village lad how he felt about his older brother's forthcoming ordination, I was told, "I don't know." The tone of his reply indicated that he was not evading the question, so I pursued the matter further: "Well, do you feel happy about it? Do you wish you were being ordained together with him?" He answered: "The ordination is not for another three days. I do not know how I will feel at that time. But when that time comes I will know." In another case, I was going up the canal with a villager to attend a "Kathin" being held at the monastery. (A "Kathin" is a fiesta-like merit making ceremony sponsored by a person or group of persons from outside the village at which new robes are presented to the monastery monks. It involves the sponsors, their local hosts, and all villagers who wish to attend.) Although not necessarily an annual event, "Kathins" are held often enough at Monastery Bang Chan so that this villager, who was also a member of the monastery lay committee, was thoroughly familiar with every aspect of them. Simply to make conversation, I asked him: "What is the 'Kathin' going to be like today?" to which he replied, "I do not know. I have not been to the monastery yet today." Assuming that his past experience with "Kathins" provided him with some knowledge of the goings-on, I went on: "Well, do you think there will be many people?" His answer: "I do not know. You never know what a situation is like until you meet it. I have not met this one yet today."

The point of these various illustrations is that they represent a psychological universe of uncertainty and unpredictability. And in this kind of universe—where one hesitates to build up sharply defined expectations and where one is forever aware of the mutability and frailty of the environment—it is not unusual that there should also be a high tolerance for interpersonal nonconformity. What the actual limits are, theoretical or empirical, to this tendency to nonconformity are uncertain. Much of the nonconformity is undoubtedly made possible, in the first instance, by the sociologically simple and relatively undifferentiated nature of Bang Chan society; that is, the actual number of functionally specific tasks and roles—those that require special competencies—are few, and any number of different individuals can perform them. Thus, when a Bang Chan employee walks out on his boss or when a wife walks out on her husband, their actions do not from a functional point of view disable the system. Since the requirements of the role of house servant or farmhand are characteristically simple and understood by all, the departing employee can usually be replaced by another individual. Similarly, since any adult—aunt, grandparents, older sibling—can and often does rear another's children, and

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were at first a series of unrelated incidents—that is, the possible tenuousness of the links between parent and child first came to my attention with the occasional, but wholly unselfconscious, reports from informants on what to my Western ears seemed like rather turbulent childhoods: their frequent movement from family to family while they were still children and their own care, as adults, of friends' or relatives' children. (This suspicion was reinforced and partially verified later while recording life histories). Later it was noticed that, in sharp contrast to the West, villagers tend to be less concerned about the illness of children than the illness of adults; informants with whom this observation was discussed said either that they had not noticed or explained it by saying that since children recover so quickly from sickness there is less need to worry about them. Finally and perhaps most important, it became clear that the request of the villager who stopped me and asked me to take and rear her child was by no means idiosyncratic; the request was made on four separate occasions by different individuals, both within and without Bang Chan. The intent of these requests were difficult to ascertain. Since the requests tended to come up rather suddenly, in the presence of the child, and were always accompanied by laughter, they may well have been said in "jest" or as a threat to the child. On a few occasions the parent took pains to be sure the child understood what was being said, in which case the child responded with screaming. Also, Europeans have traditionally been used as bogey men in the disciplining of children. (I myself have occasionally been addressed as a malevolent spirit by youngsters.) On the other hand, because children of poor families have been known to be given to individuals of high status, and because Occidentals are automatically assigned such status, it is not altogether unlikely that the parent was sounding me out as a potential patron of the child.

The problem with all the above, however, is that it was unknown to what extent they represented typical or deviant attitudes and responses. The Sentence Completion item, *"We want to give our child to him because . . ."* was selected for use in the SCT administered to a larger, representative sample of villagers because, being an extreme phrasing of these attitudes, it might shed light on the villagers' general readiness to accept them as well as their justifications for them. Of the fifty-six informants who responded to the item, 79 percent accepted the premise and 21 percent rejected it, *i.e.*, "I do not want to give my child to anybody." Of the forty-five individuals who accepted the premise, nineteen said it was good for either the child or the parent, *i.e.*, "that person was good, and he wanted that person to teach his child to be good"; "I would get some money by giving it away"; "I could not stand the child anymore." And eighteen said it was justifiable, *i.e.*, "because of poverty"; "I did not have the means to rear the child."

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intrapsychic forces, tempered by the investigator's capacity to see through them. Exactly what role they play in the fashioning of the final research product can probably never be fully determined since informants may not know or will not tell you what they "think" of you; and they are likely to be even less aware of how their thoughts have influenced their responses. Similarly, despite his training in self-consciousness, the investigator never has complete command over all the factors that prompted him to pursue a particular course of action in the field or an interpretive bent during the write-up. The problem is further complicated because there are numerous things which occur in the field that have little to do with the research as such, but which often impinge upon it, for example, an informant becoming markedly more aggressive during an interview when he learns that you have just returned from seeing a villager whom he dislikes. (This kind of information when it is available is not without interest. But no field worker is so omniscient as to have such complete knowledge of the likes, dislikes, and psychodynamics of every informant and thereby comprehend every turn in his behavior.) Yet, despite these ultimate limitations, the investigator can try to make as explicit as possible those human factors that he perceives as influencing the nature of the research experience. We will proceed from the relatively obvious to the more subtle considerations that bear on the materials being presented.

### *Villagers' Attitudes Toward the Investigators*

Perhaps the major factor conditioning the villagers' attitude toward the research was the fact that other Cornell University investigators had worked in the community prior to my arrival. This meant several things: that precedents had been set for asking villagers personal and impersonal questions; that friendly, but generally not intimate, relationships had been established with several key villagers, notably those recognized as informal community leaders; that the villagers had come to accept the presence of Europeans as a normal part of their lives; and that our presence was seen as essentially a good thing. Not only were the *farang* (the Thai term for Occidentals) a source of novelty with their strange interests and long noses, as well as a source of prestige (for having singled out Bang Chan as the community being studied by "American professors"), but they were also a source of considerable practical help. Earlier Cornell workers had given funds to the Bang Chan monastery and school, had helped obtain vaccine to prevent a diphtheria epidemic, and had contributed added income to a few families in the form of rent for the "Cornell office" or salaries for the boys serving as the research team's boatmen. Perhaps the most important contribution the members of the research team made to the community, as

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123 perceived by the Bang Chaners themselves, was to act as a source of advice and practical knowledge. The kinds of counsel villagers sought from the field workers varied considerably. Some wanted help in deciding whether it was more profitable to raise chickens or turkeys, another wanted us to obtain information for him on the laws governing land ownership. However, some of their requests simply could not be met, *i.e.*, "Tell me some of the modern, scientific ways to get a woman to fall in love with you"; "Can you get me one of those 'machines' that prevents children?"

Not all villagers of course viewed the Cornell activities in these terms; the vast majority in fact accepted our presence with no marked sense of involvement of any sort. The *farang* and their Thai associates were perceived by this majority group simply as people with their own interests whose presence might prove beneficial, and toward whom one should behave tolerantly and coöperatively. Interestingly enough, during all the time I worked in the community I encountered only two cases in which villagers actively expressed disapproval or annoyance at "Cornell." In one case, a villager was deeply affronted because he felt that a Thai research associate whom he knew in the village had snubbed him during a chance meeting in Bangkok. In the other case, involving my own research, a villager complained that we had wasted his time asking him to take the Sentence Completion Test: "The questions they asked me had no use at all. They did not ask about food, or making a living, or anything important. I have more important things to do with my time." There may have been other villagers whose feelings were not too unlike those of this individual. However, this was the only case that came to my attention of a villager actually articulating his displeasure toward the research, despite my active search for any indication of negative attitudes on the part of respondents. In this connection, it might be noted that of the 123 villagers who were approached to take the Sentence Completion Test, only two gave us outright refusals. One, the Chinese tailor, said he could not handle Thai well enough (he was right) and did not like to talk to people; the other, a girl of twenty, would out of embarrassment run out the rear door of her house every time she saw us paddling up to the front. The generally open and accepting attitude of other villagers toward my research requests, however, was very similar to that given to earlier researchers, and was undoubtedly conditioned by the precedents they had established.

Given the above considerations, my entry into the community did not elicit any kind of special response from the villagers. For most, I was simply another representative of "Cornell" who had come to study their "way of life"—a friendly, interesting, and harmless soul who, if the need arose, might be of some help. If and when I came to visit them, they would find out precisely what I came to study and what I was like. But they clearly

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were not waiting for my visits with any keen sense of anticipation. The 123
dominant attitude was one of conditional acceptance which could easily turn to active, amiable interest once a face-to-face encounter had been initiated. In general, they expected me to initiate the contact. This somewhat passive attitude was in part a result of the feelings of *kreeŋcaj* (humbleness and self-effacement) that they had toward social superiors, a role they automatically assigned to me. In part it was probably also a legacy from the role of respondent (a person who reacts, rather than initiates) that they had developed with earlier field workers and which had become part of their normal expectations toward Cornell personnel. There were of course villagers who from the very beginning actively sought me out and tried to develop special kinds of relationships. The person who tried to sell me the idea of building on his land a newer, more expensive "Cornell Office" was one such individual. Less business-minded was the villager who occasionally would stop by at the office to tell me not to see any informants that day: he knew of a special ritual being performed that he thought I would be interested to see instead. Still another villager approached me with the proposition that he knew more about what was happening in Bang Chan than anyone else and that I should not believe what people told me until I had checked with him; I was never able to discover what this person's motives were, other than to satisfy his own self-image.

Several relationships developed that had little to do with the services we could perform for each other or even with the research itself but which seemed based simply on the mutual regard we felt toward one another. This area of "friendship" is perhaps the most difficult to talk about because its limits were always set, in some latent and undefinable way, by the facts of cultural differences. No matter how relaxed and enjoyable a relationship might be, it was always colored by awareness of the possibility that the other person might not understand. Potential lack of understanding, however, was not always detrimental: sometimes it helped to underscore the fact that *despite* possible miscommunication, we could enjoy and respect each other. Here "friendship" was based in part on the willingness to appreciate each other's differences.

What qualities of the author these villagers considered attractive—over and above the social and service characteristics he shared with other Cornell people—can only be surmised. It is clear that despite the fact that for most purposes villagers lumped all Cornell personnel into the general category of *farang*, many Bang Chaners made sharp personal distinctions among us. My field assistant, partly for his own amusement and partly at my request, asked a number of villagers for their opinions of the different *farang*. Included among his informants were some of the same people toward whom I felt especially close. (It should be noted that these "close

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123 friends" never numbered more than eight or ten people, out of a total population of 1,771.) Although their opinions differed in detail and covered a considerable range, they seemed to agree that I had a *good heart*. One villager said that he knew I had a good heart because children like me, "and children are only attracted to people who have good hearts." On the other hand, another more critical person said that my personality was just like that of a child, "because he always shows his feelings. He does not know how to be cool." The contrasts the villagers saw between myself and other researchers were particularly instructive. Of another field worker, an informant said: "he is not a kind person like *Aacaan* Herb, but he knows how to treat people in the Thai way. *Aacaan* Herb does not know how. He laughs too loud and does not use flattering words. He does not help me as much as the other person either." Yet, in contrast, another villager said: "I like *Aacaan* Herb because he likes me. He tells funny stories. He is not like some of the other *farang* who leave as soon as they get information from you."

123 The ultimate importance of these personal assessments are not easily
124 determined. One villager perceptively noted, for example, that although
[115] the "boss" of the Cornell team was a "good person," it really did not make any difference whether he was good or bad "because he is the 'boss' and bosses have to be respected." Of more direct relevance to the research was
[125] the fact that those individuals whom I counted among my warmest friends were not necessarily my best informants; in fact, some became inordinately anxious and evasive while taking the Sentence Completion Test and TAT. On the other hand, some villagers whom I had never seen before responded to these tasks with obvious enthusiasm. Even the villager who complained about my having wasted his time was a good informant, in the sense of appearing stimulated by and genuinely involved in responding to the sentence cues. It is clear, however, that villagers who liked me were the most approachable of informants, and were more ready, at least initially, to acquiesce to interview requests. The crucial factor here may well be the difference between responding to the field worker versus responding to the research; that is, even though all the respondents were originally induced into being interviewed as a favor to me—and their willingness was in part a function of how much they liked me—such favors did not necessarily carry over to the substantive purposes of the interview: reacting to my queries in a concerned and committed way. Thus, some informants went through the entire interview experience carefully fulfilling the interpersonal "obligation" but all but ignoring its content; others were so stimulated by the content that their initial attitudes toward me, positive or negative, became largely irrelevant. The vast majority of informants of course fell between these two extremes; and in no case were either the interpersonal or substan-

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tive considerations completely ignored. In this regard, it must be remembered that for much of the research I was dealing with informants who were selected not for their readiness to give revealing information but for their social psychological representativeness as adult Bang Chaners. Under such conditions, it was inevitable that there should be people who cared little about me or my purposes, just as there should be people who felt the precise opposite. 123 • 124

One aspect of the villagers' attitudes deserves special mention. This concerns their perception of me as an *aacaan*, or "teacher." This perception had significant effects, both positive and negative, on their behavior during the interviews. On the positive side, many informants were genuinely flattered by being asked for information that would contribute to "knowledge." Precisely how their thoughts and opinions might contribute to "knowledge"—or as I sometimes told them, "science"—was not too clear in their minds. But the fact that I was a "teacher" who had crossed the seas and would spend months asking them questions clearly indicated the seriousness of my business. This definition had a marked influence on their whole orientation to the interviewing situation in that they generally approached it with an attitude of earnestness, and on occasion, even solemnity. In fact, my "rapport time" with informants was very often spent in trying to mitigate their expectations about the interview so that they would respond to the substantive questions in a relaxed and easy manner. Usually these efforts were successful and the interview proceeded as a well-balanced combination of seriousness and *sanug*. The most frequent comment of informants after the Sentence Completion interviews was, "It was much easier than I thought it would be." On the negative side, however, informants would sometimes use their solemn definition of the interview as a means of resisting participation in it. Their resistances would take the general form of pleading that they were only ignorant peasants who did not know much about anything; that if I wanted a "true" picture of the way peasants "think," I ought to see more intelligent informants; that their information would "spoil" my results, and the like. Again, I was usually able to allay such protestations by emphasizing the simplicity and "sanug-fulness" of the experience. However, sometimes informants took me literally and produced responses which were "simply" literal restatements of what I had asked them or which had no intelligible relationship to the questions. Once, when I stopped an interview to clarify my purposes, an informant asserted, "But I am giving you simple answers"; in another instance the informant smiled wryly and said, "But I told you I was not very intelligent." A few informants were genuinely interested in the interview but simply lacked the wherewithal to deal with the material. If asked, however, to make a judgment on whether the villagers' perception of me as

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123 124 a "serious-minded teacher" generally worked to the advantage or disadvantage of the research, I would definitely answer, "the former."

114 Perhaps even more important than the villagers' attitudes toward the author were their attitudes toward the Thai field assistants who worked with me at various times. It was through the field assistant that many villagers had their actual contact with the research and through him (or her) that I obtained a large part of my data.[1] Because the role of field assistant requires such distinctive qualities—"competence" in a foreign language, willingness to work with peasants and an appreciation of them, a desire to learn the way "other people" live—it was not easy to obtain or retain individuals to work with in Bang Chan. In a country such as Thailand where the term "social science" was virtually unknown until a few years ago, the position of "research assistant" simply offers no occupational future. Consequently, I had six different assistants working for me at different times during almost two years in the field. Two of these individuals were with me for less than three weeks. (One left the rice fields of Bang Chan for a position at the Thai Embassy in Rome; the other just did not like peasants.) Two were extremely able female graduate students in Education who worked only on Sundays and holidays, primarily with the younger village women. Out of both loyalty to me and a genuine interest in, almost love for, the villagers, they stayed on until the research was completed. The fifth, my major assistant, took three months to find, but he remained with me for fourteen months. When he left to work in Burma ("because I have never been to Burma") his place was taken by a very competent and sophisticated assistant district officer whom I "borrowed" from the Ministry of Interior. This last chap saw me through the life histories. Although he was excellent in the highly personalized setting of the life history interviews, his polished urban manner would have been too overbearing for the majority of informants during the earlier, more sensitive stages of the research. While this coming and going of field assistants,

12 114 [1] During the early stages of field work I was completely dependent on my assistant-translators, despite six months language training prior to leaving for the field. Later, I gained enough control over Thai to participate actively in the interviews. In order to minimize translation errors, however, it was decided to conduct and record all *formal* interviews (those involving the Sentence Completion Method, TAT, and life histories) completely in Thai, and translate later. The reasons for this are more fully discussed below. In effect, this meant training the assistant to carry the burden of the Sentence Completion interviews, the first large block of the research. By the time we reached the life histories, the interviews were taking the form of the informant replying directly to both myself and the assistant. All formal interviews were based on carefully prepared schedules, including even such matters as instructing on seating arrangements. Only a portion of the total data of course came from these formal interviews. All the preceding materials, for example, were based directly on my own observations, or on the small but crucial verbal events that occurred outside the interviews and which actually comprised the interactive substance of day-to-day life.

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extent by becoming succoring females—taking care of the less fortunate, seeking opportunities where they can help others, and the like.

The relevance of these remarks to the work of the assistants in Bang Chan is that they represent the attitudes the girls brought into play in their relationships with the villagers. In the eyes of Bang Chaners, they were well-educated, high status city girls who combined the finest qualities of the Thai woman. They were not only clever because they carried clipboards and spoke two languages but they were "good" girls who used "sweet words" and proper terms of address and "brought us medicine when we were ill. They knew how to help farmers." In contrast to my own practice—which was to give villagers aspirin only if they explicitly asked for help, or if the problem was more serious to plead incompetence—their actions were entirely spontaneous. In the same way, villagers would often wonder why after working all week at the university, these girls would spend their Sundays and holidays in Bang Chan. The answer was not hard for them to find: "These girls have much progress. They want to help the nation and themselves. So they come here and work for *Aacaan* Herb. This will help them go to America. And then they will have more progress." Although this motive may have entered into the assistants' decisions, a more important reason was the simple pleasure they derived from listening to villagers bare their problems and preoccupations. By giving of their time and interest they were fulfilling their own best image of themselves.

A final word should be said about the various relationships existing among the assistants and myself. The relationships that developed among the assistants themselves was perhaps the ideal Thai adjustment to the unique situation in which these three young, unmarried people found themselves: they began to treat each other like brothers and sisters. Theirs was not a perfect sibling relationship—not even in the fictive sense, for they were keenly aware of their differences in background and of the desirability of keeping romantic considerations out of the relationship. However, their very differences in background helped form a bond of mutual respect.

Their attitudes toward the author were more complicated. Although in many ways they treated me too as a sibling, their attitudes were forever colored by the fact that I was a *farang*. On the positive side, this meant that they respected me for my technical training and knowledge, and for my obvious concern about learning as much as I could about the villagers. By the same token, however, they would frequently become annoyed by my inability to see things which in Thai terms were obvious, or by my insistence on probing matters that in their terms were either unanswerable or better left unexamined. Their attitudes toward me were not too different

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from those of the villagers, except that because our relationship was considerably more sustained and intellectually stimulating (they wanted to know about the village almost as much as I did), it was more intimate and unguarded. My closest friend in Thailand was not a villager but my male field assistant.

### *Investigator's Attitudes Toward the Villagers*

Anthropological field work has been referred to variously as "a period of stepped-up socialization," "the ultimate test of the value and limitations of empathy," and more simply "the most rewarding part of the anthropological endeavor." It is all these things. However, perhaps its most distinctive characteristic is that it is a period of intensified self-control. It involves the willingness to suspend one's normal and familiar patterns of behavior in deference to patterns which are appropriate to the culture being studied, or at least not too incongruent, and which are aimed at one's overriding purpose in being there: to obtain data.[3] The rewards of field work are of course immediately apparent: to encounter directly a different arrangement of the human experience. But field work also involves the psychological price of being temporarily willing not "to be oneself." There are of course numerous instances within one's own culture when one does not behave like "oneself," but simply assumes the pose associated with one's role. What is distinctive of field work is the highly *sustained* quality of one's "acting"; the researcher must be *continuously* concerned with tailoring his actions to suit others' preferences. The problem is complicated further by the fact that in field work the preferences of others are usually only slightly known; in fact, the discovery of such preferences is part and parcel of the very process of field work. Thus, the researcher tends to be even more hesitant and concerned with keeping himself under rein. It should be noted that "not being oneself" is not identical with "not being true to oneself." Indeed, the ideal adaptation to the psychic requirements of the field situation may be to feel any way one wants to *feel* toward one's informants, but to be sure to *act* properly toward them.

My overt behavior toward the villagers involved assuming something of a social pose, but a relatively straightforward and simple one. I attempted to present myself as an interested, uncritical, and mildly bewildered young

[3] I am not speaking here simply of functioning comfortably in an alien culture. Cultures differ radically in the degree of conformity to or deviance from prevailing patterns that is permitted individuals; and in this respect, Thai culture is extraordinarily tolerant of personal deviance. However, this is not the same as living in a foreign culture when one's *raison d'être* is to induce members of that culture to coöperate, provide information, and confide in oneself. Here it is incumbent upon the outsider to make some adjustments in his normal behavioral responses.

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man who wanted their help for the sake of "knowledge." I came to Thailand because a very wealthy American who manufactured automobiles (The Ford Foundation) had decided to make merit by giving money to universities as well as to monasteries and hospitals; I had applied for a fellowship, and he had given me the money.[4]

In my actual contacts with villagers, I tended to be much more docile and unassertive than is my wont, often to the extent of appearing diffident. Although in the relationships with my assistants I did not hesitate to express my opinions and evaluations of things—often in an excitable and seemingly aggressive way, which is one of my "natural" and extremely non-Thai modes of expression—I tried to keep my comments to villagers free of any evaluation. The only time I really let myself go was in laughter, which villagers liked but which they sometimes thought was undignified. To the countless little frustrations that occur in the field—spending an hour with an informant "making rapport" only to be told that he was too tired to take the TAT; seeing an informant get up at the high point of an interview, say "I must go," and simply leave—I responded either with giggling or stoicism, never anger. This latter posture was particularly difficult to maintain. When the owner of the "Cornell Office" asked me for three times the agreed upon cost of rent and board, I answered first by giggling and then by changing the subject, although neither was in any way representative of my genuine feelings. I later paid the original amount through a go-between, and nothing further was said.

Not all my behavior was oriented toward controlling such feelings, and not all of it was by any means intended as a disguise. In fact, the role of being an "interested, uncritical, and mildly bewildered young man" was not only the best way to present myself to the villagers from the point of view of effective research, but was often the way I felt. (The bewilderment was effective to the extent that it often elicited clarifications and specifications from informants who wanted to be sure I understood.) Similarly, my expressions of laughter were quite consistent with village patterns, and they could not easily be feigned. Perhaps one of the most enjoyable aspects of the pose was when I provided villagers with accurate and truthful answers to questions they might ask, but in an idiom that I thought would be most meaningful to them, *e.g.*, Henry Ford's merit-making activities.

[4] The source of my funds was of never-ending interest to the villagers. One Bang Chaner said he understood what the source of my funds was, but did not quite understand how I actually obtained them. "How does the money get into your wallet?" I explained that prior to my departure from the United States, I made arrangements with my benefactor's secretary to have the money deposited in a bank in Bangkok. And whenever I needed money, I would write a check and obtain the *baht* equivalent of the amount I had written. At this explanation, the villager broke out into a broad smile and said: "That's wonderful. It sounds just like Communism!"

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123 My attitude here was not patronizing, any more than was theirs when faced with a culturally complicated question from me. Such rephrasings were simply easy and "sanug-ful" ways of communicating our points.

An investigator's feelings toward the people whom he is studying, as distinguished from his overt behavior, are significant only to the extent that they might affect the nature and interpretation of his data. It is the writer's belief that except where indicated, my feelings toward the villagers did not influence my description of them in any significant way. However, because I am dealing here with rather subtle materials and because, irrespective of intentions, personal feelings can be insidious in their intrusion, a few words should be said about my sentiments toward the villagers.

My dominant feeling toward them was shaped by the intellectual challenge they presented me. There were things they did that I simply did not understand, that I struggled with for months, and only some of which resulted in solutions coherent enough to be presented here. There were [156] other things they did that I never managed to comprehend, but which I just came to respect as their way of functioning, *e.g.*, a villager stopping himself in the middle of a conversation and, without a *single* word of explanation, leaving. What was "incomprehensible" was not only that he did this, but that the other villagers in attendance accepted his behavior as thoroughly normal. When asked how they felt about his leave-taking, the answer was almost invariably, "*Chaoj-chaoj*" (cool, indifferent). When asked more precisely, "Well, weren't you surprised by his suddenness; that he just turned his back and left?", they answered. "No, he must have had somewhere to go." What was "challenging" here and in the literally hundreds of other events of the same order was that the act was contrary to one of my most fundamental *assumptions* about the nature of human contact: in this case, that there should be some cue indicating the imminent termination of the relationship. Perhaps there was a cue, but one so subtle as to be impossible for me to spot. However, it was events of this kind, occurring week after week, that made the research the intellectually exciting experience it was.

On the less cerebral level, my feelings toward the villagers were more ambivalent. On the negative side, I was annoyed by their unabashed self-seeking, their manipulation of each other as well as myself, their ambiguity, and the relative lack of trust that many of them had in others, even those who were supposedly closest to them. Much of this was explicable in terms of their life histories and, to a lesser extent, in terms of their poverty; nonetheless, they were realities which I as a human being (as distinguished from an anthropologist) reacted to subjectively. On the [156] positive side, I admired them for their easy acceptance of themselves, for their down-to-earth quality, for their tolerance of others, and for their use of social forms, which, although often lacking in depth, emphasized the

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dignity of each person. Particularly attractive were the older villagers who, having made their peace with life, would freely articulate their thoughts and feelings about themselves and their world.

Again, the relevance of these personal, subjective considerations to the research results is problematic and I would hope inconsequential. They have been presented here because despite its avowed purpose, field work is always both a human experience and a research experience.

### *Fashioning an SCT For Bang Chan*

In this section we shift our attention from the human and interpersonal dimensions of field work to the more technical area of the development and application of the Sentence Completion Technique in Bang Chan.[8]

To begin, it is well to keep in mind a few important historical considerations. The Sentence Completion Technique (hereafter referred to as the SCT) comes out of an intellectual tradition whose premises and intellectual style the author is familiar with but does not necessarily share; that is, the SCT was developed and has been used almost exclusively in the context of the "testing and measurement" tradition of clinical and educational psychology. This was a tradition, beginning with the work of Galton during the latter part of the nineteenth century, that appropriately emphasized the precise and objective measurement of human capacities and traits but which, as it developed through the years, tended to make "the test"—a shorthand, simplistic, preferably quick and self-administered summary of the traits or persons being studied—an end in itself. The I.Q. test, with its single numerical summary of a person's mental capacities, is perhaps the ultimate expression of this tradition.

The individuals who developed and refined the SCT (originally Payne 1928 and Tendler 1930; in more recent years, Rotter 1951, Sacks and Levy 1952, Levy 1952, Holsopple and Miale 1954, Burwen, Campbell and Kidd 1956, Trites 1956, Zimmer 1956, Benton, Windler and Erdice 1957, and Rohde 1957) have all operated in terms of this intellectual orientation. Reading their work and other SCT literature reveals a recurrent concern with how the SCT should be administered and coded, with whether short items are better than longer ones, with what other tests and measures the instrument should be correlated, and the like. However, *nowhere* can one find a statement of why the test works (to my knowledge, the discussion in this book is the first to be addressed to this question) and no one, except Hanfmann and Getzels (1953) and Davids (1955) raises the crucial issue

[8] The basic *theory* behind the Sentence Completion Technique and the rationale for the analysis of the research *results* are presented in the next chapter. Our concern at this point is more empirical and focuses on the actual construction of the instrument for use in Bang Chan and on some of the problems and resolutions encountered in its application.

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each person's own ideas, not those of other family members, it would be best to find somewhere we can be by ourselves.[11] Every informant in the sample eventually accepted our request for privacy with complete understanding. Also, it was usually easy to find an isolated spot: underneath the house, a buffalo shed, in a grove of trees, or if necessary in the boat. However, because Bang Chan notions of privacy do not apply to children, approximately one-third of the interviews were conducted with children in attendance at one point or another. The first time a child appeared, we made an attempt to shoo him away. This, however, was usually futile: he would leave and then return; only the boredom of our adult conversation would eventually drive him away. In the case of nursing children, we would always wait until the mother was free, although if the child wanted the breast during the interview we would simply continue and "ignore" his presence; his mother seemed to, at least at the conscious level.

One of the more important administrative tasks of the pre-test was to try out various instructions that would be given to *informants* on how to take the SCT. During these trial interviews, we experimented with various versions of the "introductory remarks" and settled on the following as the version to be used with our final 111 informants:

After explaining to the informant that we had come to chat, and after having chatted (which varied from ten minutes to two hours, depending upon the subject matter and the mood of the informant) we reminded him that I had been sent to Bang Chan by Cornell University to study the life and thought of the Thai people: "My professor sent me, and when I return to America, he will examine me on the information that I have gathered. So I would like to ask you for your *personal* help. I know that you can help me and can give me a true picture of the life and thought of Thai farmers. And [with a giggle] I think you can help me pass my examination." At this point, during the regular interviews, I would remind the informant that a few weeks earlier the abbot of Monastery Bang Chan had, on a ceremonially auspicious day, supervised the lottery from which the names of my informants had been selected: [12]

> *Aacaan* Phuang supervised the ceremony and your family was one of the families chosen in the lottery to be interviewed by me. Both *Aacaan* Phuang and I thought that this was the best way to select

[11] Informants were also asked, on the same grounds, not to reveal the items or their responses to other villagers. We are certain that there were several who ignored our request—not out of malice but simply because it was not that important to them. However, since there were so many items on the schedule, covering so many different areas, I doubt whether their reports to other potential informants biased our results in any substantial way.

[12] I am indebted to Robert B. Textor for having originally suggested this method of selecting part of my sample.

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families if I am to obtain the true picture about the people of Bang Chan.

I have something here that is like a game or a puzzle. It is a list of sentences about things that happen every day in life; just plain, ordinary things. These sentences, however, are not complete sentences. They are only half sentences. I would like you to finish these sentences for me. For example, take the sentence: *"When it begins to rain, he. . . ."* I would appreciate your finishing this sentence with anything that comes to your mind. The only thing I ask is that your completion makes sense: that it fits with the first part of the sentence. 125 124

You can make your completions as long as you want; the length of a sentence is unimportant. I want to tell you that with these sentences there is no such thing as a right completion or a wrong completion. All I would like is your own idea on what the completion should be. I expect that different people will give different completions, so all I want is your personal opinion.

I am going to ask other people in this family—except the children, of course—to complete the sentences. But we would like to ask each person one at a time, individually and privately. So I wonder if we can go somewhere where we can have privacy. But before we begin, why don't we try a test sentence. Tell me the completion of the following sentence: *"A boy, crossing a bridge, was showing off to a girl, and he fell into the canal, so he. . . ."*

### *The Selection and Nature of the Sample*

The 111 individuals comprising the SCT sample represent an 11 percent stratified sample of the adult population of Bang Chan (persons over twenty years of age, or 989 of the 1,771 villagers) on four major variables: age, sex, religion, and economic status. The sample is based on a village census gathered by earlier Cornell University researchers and brought up-to-date by me during my first few months in the field. The economic status variable is based on judgments made by the seven hamlet headmen and fourteen assistant hamlet headmen living in Bang Chan, and thus represents an "inside," nonobjective view of a family's economic position in the community.

Several factors entered into the decision to select the sample on a quota rather than random basis. Most important was my decision to select informants from only two of the seven Bang Chan hamlets. This in turn was based on the need to save time. During the period that I was working on the census and traveling through all seven hamlets, I noticed that I was actually spending twice as much time on travel than I was spending with

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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[P.122]

# IV

## The Sentence Completion Technique

*125

The following discussion details the logical considerations which underlie the analysis of the SCT responses and the procedures which have been devised for such analysis. At the same time it will serve as an introduction to the general nature of the SCT responses.

The analysis rests upon five premises.

### *How the SCT Works*

First, despite its title and appearance, there is nothing particularly esoteric about the Sentence Completion Technique. It is primarily a useful and efficient way of asking questions about matters which are of central concern in personality research—feelings of rejection, failure, anxiety, and the like—but which might be considered sensitive or personal by our informants. That the questions are phrased as incomplete sentences rather than as direct interrogations is an attempt to get at these issues in a psychologically comfortable way. Concomitantly, it is an attempt to circumvent the tendency for individuals to set up resistances and blocks when queried on such matters.[1]

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*125

[1] Whether Bang Chan villagers consider feelings of rejection, failure, and so forth, to be sensitive or private topics is, at bottom, problematic, since we have little reason to assume that they or the members of any non-Western culture share our attitude in this regard. The writer suspects that in some areas Bang Chaners do share Western attitudes about what sentiments should be concealed from (or revealed to) others, and in other areas do not. For instance, Bang Chan men would no more discuss their sexual impulses toward their daughters than would American fathers—in contrast, for example, to Pilaga Indian men (Henry 1955: 265). In contrast, most Bang Chaners seem considerably more reticent than Americans about revealing their aggressive feelings, but are considerably freer in discussing feelings of personal failure. Such discussion, of course, always varies in terms of the degree of intimacy between people.

• [123]

Two general considerations thus seem clear: (a) Bang Chan villagers are precisely like other human beings in that they have a tendency to conceal and reveal certain feelings, although the specific feelings concerned may or may not be the same as those of members of other cultures; and (b) since in the beginning of his research, an investigator really does not know in what areas or to what degree his informants are sensitive, it would seem prudent to use a technique which assumes sensitivity in all areas and attempts to get at these feelings in the least uncomfortable way.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan



*125 syntax is in our culture—and except for certain ritual occasions, perhaps in all cultures—one of the basic symptoms of psychopathy. Witness the "word salads" of hebephrenic schizophrenics and the "mental lapses" of aphasics. (See White 1948: 527; Brown 1958: 293; Goldstein 1948; and Jakobson 1957.)

On occasion some of our Bang Chan informants would ignore syntactic considerations and use the sentence cues as triggering devices for their own unanchored thoughts and preoccupations: *"When I realize other people do not like me, I feel . . .* that's happened to me sometimes. When you see that other people don't like you, you should avoid them. The Lord Buddha says. . . ." And then the completion might develop into a brief lecture on morality. At other times, the cue would trigger off an autistic explosion: *"His most unattractive quality is . . .* don't have anything to do with him! He is a wicked person. I do not want to speak to him. He doesn't talk sense. One day while I was fishing, he came along and asked me to have intercourse with him. I cursed him!" (Other data on this informant indicate that she was referring to her estranged husband.) These types of [124] "ungrammatical" responses seem to derive from the social aspects of the [123] interviewing situation—the informant has a friendly listener with a willing [521] ear and thus occasionally ignores the original definition of the SCT task to declaim on his favorite subject[8]—and also from the fact that in social discourse our Thai villagers seem to indulge more in, and have considerably greater tolerance for, autistic thought than do most Americans. That is, the villagers are more accustomed to making and hearing statements that have little apparent "objective" meaning (or in the language of psycholinguistics, "referential" meaning: Brown 1958: 315) but which are symptoms of inner states and preoccupations. The crucial point here is that a listener often does not know—or care—precisely what a speaker is talking about, but simply accepts the other person's utterances as expressions of inner, unknown concerns. Such expressions involve the leaping over of connective thought and syntactic constraints (as in the above example of the lecherous husband) or indifference to the logical currents of the discussion.[9]

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[8] Sometimes his discussions are simply expressions of phatic communion—the desire to indulge in chitchat for its own sake. (See Malinowski 1923: 315; and Hockett 1958: 585.)

[191] [9] It should be remembered that speech is not only a device for carrying on social interaction but also a mechanism for articulating one's inner preoccupations, whether or not other people understand. It is this latter use (which, incidentally, is ontogenetically the more basic: Piaget 1932; and Langer 1942: 35) about which Bang Chaners seem particularly tolerant. In general, a speaker in Bang Chan is not held very responsible for what he says. One rarely hears in the village—except from prying anthropologists—such charges as "I do not know what you are talking about. Explain yourself." For one thing, such a query would not be particularly polite; and in the villagers' scheme of things, what a person says is really his own business, re-

and KY followed by a number.) The center of social life in Bang Chan is the Buddhist monastery or wat and the adjacent government primary school. The community simply consists of the clientele which regularly patronizes Wat Bang Chan and this school rather than other comparable institutions elsewhere in the region. Within the area of the community lives a minority of Thai Moslems constituting about ten per cent of the population. They have their own mosque which happens to be just outside Bang Chan, but they attend many secular and some Buddhist functions at Wat Bang Chan. A number of small stores, which also serve as coffee houses and men's clubs, are used as neighborhood centers in different parts of the village. Near the central wat and school, there is also a store, and the house provided by one of the headmen for use as the Project headquarters.

This present interim report of the Cornell Thailand Project includes some of the data necessary for the design of a program to improve health and diet in Bang Chan. Another report, now in preparation, will give the results of a detailed dietary survey made in the community following the health survey reported on here. These two studies together will indicate existing deficiencies in health and diet, and will permit the formulation of recommendations for needed changes in behavior as these can be realized in the context of the village and national culture.

The author of this study, Dr. Hazel M. Hauck, is Professor of Food and Nutrition in Cornell University. She has been associated with the work of the Cornell Thailand Project since 1950. She not only designed and supervised the research on health, nutritional status, and diet in Bang Chan, but during almost a year of field work in Thailand she obtained valuable data on many other topics for the Project's files. Some of her daily work in Bang Chan made little sense to the villagers, but they nevertheless became devoted to her. Her energy, tact and fine spirit in facing the discomforts and difficulties of rough field work in a tropical foreign land inspired both her Thai and American associates. Working with Professor Hauck were Dr. Amusith Rajatasilpin, now a teacher in the School of Public Health in Bangkok; Miss Sapha Indrasud, now in the Ministry of Public Health; Dr. Chumlong Kittivoja, of the Dental School of the University of Medical Sciences, Bangkok; and Miss Saovanee Sudsaneh, who has been doing post-graduate work in nutrition at Cornell and Harvard. To all of these faithful workers, the Cornell Thailand Project is greatly indebted.

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September, 1956

# BANG CHAN



12 As advoced by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition (1951), this study combined clinical appraisal with dietary surveys. The only laboratory tests done were for hemoglobin content of blood, and examination of stools for parasites. Suggestions for planning the schedule for the clinical appraisal were obtained from the report on the second session of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition (1951), Nicholls (1951) and especially from Professor Dean Smith of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (1952).

125 Choice of physical measurements, and of procedures in making them, were influenced by a tentative list of specifications for anthropometric measurement, developed by the Committee on Anthropometry, Food and Nutrition Board, National Research Council (1951).

The schedule used for clinical examinations, and a description of procedures used, are included in Appendix A.

Sampling. - All of the children attending the Bang Chan primary school were examined. Three or four children who were listed on the school rolls were not present at any time during the period when examinations were in progress, and were considered by the teachers as non-attending.

Persons in a random sample of households in 5 of the 7 hamlets in the Bang Chan community were also examined. The two most outlying hamlets were excluded from the population to be sampled because of the difficulty, during the dry season, in getting to them or having them come to us. Of 230 households in the 5 hamlets, 31 were included in the random sample. Age and sex distribution of the 166 persons in the sample were roughly similar to distributions for the approximately 1700 persons in the village as a whole, as determined in the census of December 31, 1953. Following is a summary of the age distribution:

[162] [624]

| Age in Years | Bang Chan, 7 Hamlets | Random Sample, 5 Hamlets |
|---|---|---|
| 0-14 | 38% | 41% |
| 15-19 | 11% | 10% |
| 20-59 | 44% | 41% |
| 60 and over | 7% | 8% |

[162] The sample included one Muslim family of 13 members.

In the 31 households, 166 of 184 persons, i.e. 90% were examined. Of the 10% non-response group, half were unavailable, for example away at work when the examinations were in progress. The remaining members of the non-response group

• [129]

[See pp. 51-52--Analyst]

125 included adults of both sexes and some preschool children who
• 123 were unwilling to allow the physician to examine them. The small non-response group included persons of both sexes and a wide range of ages, and would therefore not be expected to bias the sample seriously. In general, rapport and cooperation were excellent.

Reproductive Function in Females

[145] Information concerning menstrual history was obtained from girls and women in the random sample of village households, and from mothers of the infants and small children whose growth and food patterns were studied (See Appendix A, schedule 3, item 35).

Information on child-bearing history was obtained from women in the random sample of village households, and from mothers of the infants and small children whose growth and food patterns were studied (See Appendix A, schedule 3, item 36).

Illness and Injury

12 [164] Evidence concerning the nature and extent of illness and injury in Bang Chan was obtained from various sources:

1) direct observation by the physician at the time of the physical examination, or when the physician was asked to visit a sick person in the village;

2) field notes in which information concerning illnesses, accidents and deaths were recorded as research workers learned of them; and

3) information obtained by structured interview in connection with surveys conducted by various persons working on the Cornell Thailand Project.

Adults in households which were included in the random sample were asked after the clinical examination whether any family member had been ill or injured during the past year. If so, the interviewer asked the nature of the illness or injury and what was done. The portion of schedule 6 which relates to this is included in Appendix A.

Some questions on illness were included in a survey of household heads in Hamlet KY-7 (Hanks, 1954) and in a structured interview to which there were 335 respondents from the

[see pp. 51-52--Analyst]

146 164 In addition, the two cases of symmetrical dermatosis observed were not of the pellagroid type and should probably not have been included with the possible signs of nutritional deficiency.

The only instance of thyroid enlargement noted (an obvious thyroid adenoma) was in a 13 year old boy who had always lived in Bang Chan. He knew of no one else in the family with such enlargement.

[125] Five girls and women in the random sample refused to permit the examining physician to palpate the liver and spleen, but he was able to carry out the rest of the inspection.

146 Almost half of the groups examined, 46% of the school children and 47% of the family sample, were free of the possible signs of nutritional deficiency. The remainder had from 1 to 7 such signs. Persons in the random sample were grouped according to age, and the percentage of each group found to have each number of signs is shown in Table 10. Note that most of the

Table 10

Number of Possible Signs of Nutritional Deficiency Occurring in 166 Individual Residents in the Family Survey, Grouped According to Age

| Age Group, years | Number of Persons Examined | Percentage of Each Group Found to Have Each Number of Signs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 or more |
| 6 and under | 33 | 94 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| 7-14 | 34 | 47 | 38 | 9 | 6 |
| 15-19 | 17 | 76 | 18 | 6 | 0 |
| 20-39 | 41 | 32 | 54 | 7 | 7 |
| 40-59 | 27 | 7 | 33 | 22 | 37 |
| 60 and over | 14 | 21 | 7 | 21 | 50 |
| Total Group | 166 | 47 | 30 | 10 | 13 |

40
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621

The age breakdown of the sample is as follows:

41 cases of 20 to 29 years of age
73 cases of 30 to 39 years of age
83 cases of 40 to 49 years of age
68 cases of 50 to 59 years of age
41 cases of 60 to 69 years of age
16 cases of 70 years or more

The occupational status breakdown is as follows:

269 farm operators
24 farm laborers
18 in trade or commerce
10 in service occupations
12 other (2 retired, 2 artisans, 1 traditional doctor,
1 janitor, 1 air force man, 1 policeman,
1 children's caretaker 1 gardener,
1 laborer in irrigation department, and
1 occupation unspecified)

• 123 Respondent Reaction to the Survey

The respondents were in general cooperative and congenial as is substantiated by the following interviewers' ratings:

(1) 93 per cent of the respondents were reported as cordial at first contact;

(2) 96 per cent of the respondents were reported friendly, cooperative, and responsive for all or most of the interview;

(3) 90 per cent of the respondents were reported as speaking freely for all or most of the interview,

(4) 91 per cent were reported as answering to the point of most or all questions, as giving reasonable, applicable answers;

(5) Only 5 per cent of the respondents were reported as giving many guarded, insincere or evasive replies, whereas 15 per cent were reported as giving some guarded, insincere or evasive replies; and 80 per cent of the respondents were reported as giving no guarded, insincere or evasive replies.

114 The interviewing period fell in a relatively quiet season between harvesting and planting of paddy. At that time farmers were readying implements and beginning to prepare for harrowing and sowing the seed-beds. The period coincided with a period of university vacation so as to recruit English-speaking interviewers. The morale of the staff was high at all times.

• • • •

121 184 *243 can later be checked through studies in a nearby control village and by comparison with results of the 1953 agricultural census. Nevertheless most of the problems of rural rice growing communities in central Thailand undergoing technological changes are expected to be found in Bangchan. We are confident, therefore, that the community is an appropriate model for locating agrarian problems and is a good site for a pilot study which is to serve as a base-line for further researches in agricultural economics and other social sciences.

Techniques for Establishing Rapport

• 123 Our first contact with Bangchan residents was made on September 1, 1948, when Professor Lauriston Sharp and the author were driving home from Minburi. We stopped over at a farm house on the side of Minburi Road two miles from the market town and introduced ourselves to a small gathering of farmers. We told them that we were both teachers, Sharp teaching in the United States and Janlekha in the nearby Kasetsat University, and that we were looking for a typical village where "Professor Sharp might study the real life of Thai farmers so that he could tell his American students how we live and work."

The place where the conversation was taking place was on the periphery of Bangchan village -- the western tip of Hamlet 4, Bangchan Commune. While one of the farmers was explaining the general condition to us, he was interrupted

123 by another farmer who was identified as Headman Weg of Hamlet 6 of the same commune. Weg said his hamlet has more people and more buffaloes, and invited us to his home which is on the other extremity of the village. Arrangement was made for a boat to carry us there on the appointed date two days later. Thus we were invited into the village by one of the leading residents who took pride in the possibility of a study of his village by an American professor.

124 At the beginning, we sought from the villagers only simple information. After the first month, when it became clear that confidence had been won, more intimate questions concerning economic matters were raised. Thai peasants do not take questions about family relationship or age as intimate questions; they even enjoy answering them. It was noticed, however, that some types of questions brought better response than others. We did not attempt to get all the information we needed at the first interview, and only the topics which appeared to interest the respondent were pursued. We did not set any rigid rule on the length of an interview period but left it up to the apparent disposition of the interviewee. It was observed, however, that normally distraction began to set in after the first half-hour. We usually stopped at this point. If the conversation had to be continued, we made it apparent that business was over by laying aside our pencil and notes. In every possible way we tried not to offend respondents. Not infrequently we brought an interview to an end within the first few minutes

124 when only a slight sign of distraction was noticed. Our daily visits to this small concentration of population gave re-interviewing a much higher advantage over a prolonged interview. Experience with Bangchan people revealed that occasional non-response was not due to the subject matter but rather to the approach and circumstances. With a more tactful approach and under a slightly different circumstance in a subsequent interview, we were able to obtain most of the information we sought but did not get in the previous interview.

• 123 To return the hospitality rendered us we offered small personal services like a lift or taking the sick to Bangkok hospitals. We tried to avoid monetary gifts to individuals which might lead to distorted information intended to please us, but we did give monetary gifts to public institutions like the school at an opportune time. We were particularly anxious to help the community as a whole especially in the fight against epidemics. Incidentally, Bangchan will always remember our active part in bringing the veterinarians to the village in time to check the spread of rinderpest in the end of 1948. From then on the villagers tended to think of us as a most effective means to communicate with high officials in Bangkok. This conviction was reinforced by subsequent visits of top level officials to the village which were unprecedented. In the second period of study in 1952-54, we were able to render medical aid and advice. We also played a significant role in the campaign

123 to get government support for the new school building.

Our non-official status relieved us from the responsibility of direct action and thus gave us the immunity from any criticism when sought help had not been responded, while in any event we enjoyed the privilege of the contact men. In the eyes of Bangchan villagers, we were equated with high officials and were given due respect. At the same time, as willing contact men, we were also thought of as good friends of Bangchan.

We did not, for a moment, seek to be admitted as if we were local people, which would appear to be artificial and which might be interpreted as insincerity. It seemed to us, nevertheless, that our sincere treatment of the villagers with some reservation as our equals -- a rare privilege in their experience -- was the most important factor militating in favor of our good rapport with Bangchan.

Techniques for Gathering Informations

12 Various techniques were used in securing information, each adopted with a view to procuring the best possible result under different circumstances. In general, information may be classified according to the methods used in obtaining it as follows: (1) structured questionnaires and check lists;[4] (2) informal interviews; (3) daily records of research workers; and (4) supplemental written records made by local residents.

4. See Appendix B.